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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES GIBSON ON ABC-TV PROGRAM, "GOOD MORNING AMERICA"
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CHARLES GIBSON: The Haitian agreement -- what were the events leading up to that agreement, and what lies ahead for the Haitian people and the prospects for democracy?

Joining us this morning from the Pentagon is the Defense secretary, William Perry. Mr. Perry, Mr. Secretary, good to have you back with us.

SEC. PERRY: Thank you, Charlie.

MR. GIBSON: The agreement does not call explicitly for Generals Cedras and Biamby to leave. Will they?

SEC. PERRY: The -- you're quite correct. The agreement does not specify that. I believe they should leave, and I believe they will leave, and it just will not be practical for them to stay on the island after the Cedras (sic) regime gets established.

MR. GIBSON: Did they informally say to the negotiating team that they would leave?

SEC. PERRY: I can't comment on that.

MR. GIBSON: Do you worry, though, from a psychological standpoint -- I mean, the president on Thursday night said to these leaders, "Your time is up." It turns out their time is up, but they have potentially another 25 days in power and potentially they can stay in the country as a rallying point for opposition to President Aristide.

SEC. PERRY: It's a (sic) interesting call as to whether the risks of having them stay on for this four-week period were greater than the risk of a forcible entry. Our judgment was that by avoiding the casualties and the bloodshed that would occur with the forceful entry, that was a good trade.

MR. GIBSON: Mr. Secretary, the Haitian military is supposed to cooperate with the U.S. troops when they arrive. Any indication they will?

SEC. PERRY: We have, of course, the assurance of the Haitian government -- we do not believe we should have our troops depend just on that assurance, and so therefore they're going to go in in strength and fully armed, so they will be prepared for whatever contingency develops.

MR. GIBSON: What time do the first troops, U.S. troops, go ashore?

SEC. PERRY: General Shelton will be going in this morning. He will meet with General Cedras and they will work out in details the actual flow of troops. I expect the flow to start later on today.

MR. GIBSON: Will they go in gradually, Mr. Secretary, or will they go in in force?

SEC. PERRY: They'll go in gradually.

MR. GIBSON: And so you expect how many today, how many in three days, how many in seven days?

SEC. PERRY: I expect -- within a week or so, we expect 14 (thousand) to 15,000. I'm not prepared to discuss the operational details of how they're going in.

MR. GIBSON: Well, this -- if they go in gradually, I'm just -- really, the reason I ask is do you feel that the first troops to go in may be at greater risk, since they're specifically a smaller

number?

SEC. PERRY: They will be -- each group that goes in will be capable of defending itself, both in terms of size and in terms of arms.

MR. GIBSON: Mr. Secretary, how close were the planes last night when they turned back?

SEC. PERRY: Well, they were about halfway.

MR. GIBSON: So they were how many hours from the time that those paratroopers were supposed to land?

SEC. PERRY: Well, there were numerous planes in the air when they turned back, but with different missions. In terms of the paratroopers, the paratroopers were going to go in one minute after midnight -- were scheduled to go in one minute after midnight.

MR. GIBSON: At the time they took off, did you expect that they were actually going to go in?

SEC. PERRY: Yes, I did.

MR. GIBSON: The military that is still in Haiti -- presumably there will be some demobilization. Will there be money provided for the military officers who are demobilized in Haiti?

SEC. PERRY: I can't give you the details of that, Charlie. There's a substantial amount of funds put together by an international consortium to provide for the economic development of Haiti, and that would certainly include finding jobs for, finding ways of converting the military operations.

MR. GIBSON: It's an international fund with most of the money supplied by the United States?

SEC. PERRY: No, no, a lot of it's supplied by the United States, but not as much as 50 percent.

MR. GIBSON: Mr. Secretary, your greatest concern at this point -- is it overt opposition to American troops or is it retribution between Haitians in which Americans could get caught in the crossfire?

SEC. PERRY: I have two concerns at this point, of equal importance. The first is how -- whether and how the Haitian government carries out their agreement. We'll get our first evidence

of that today as General Shelton meets with General Cedras and our troops start flowing in.

If they carry out their agreement adequately, then the next concern will be harassment of troops by irregulars, by guerrillas. Both of those are concerns.

MR. GIBSON: I'm interested in your first concern, because General Cedras had signed an agreement to leave in October of 1993, didn't. He now signs an agreement to step down from power in October, 1994. You're worried perhaps he won't keep this one?

SEC. PERRY: As I mentioned before, nothing that we will be doing today will be based on trust. It will be based on our full ability to carry out any actions that we take.

MR. GIBSON: Mr. Secretary, it's always good to see you. Thank you for being --

SEC. PERRY: Nice to see you, Charlie.

MR. GIBSON: -- with us this morning. Appreciate it after a very late night and a long couple of days, joining us this morning.